

CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

PENDING CLAIMS

Claims 1-3 (Canceled).

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A method of manufacturing reclosable packages, each package having a slider-operated zipper with end portions that function as slider end stops, comprising the following steps:

(a) transmitting sufficient ultrasonic wave energy into first and second areas of a zipper tape to cause material of first and second interlocked zipper parts of said zipper tape to deform and fuse in said first and second areas, said first and second areas being separated by a gap, the fused material of said first and second zipper parts in said first and second areas each forming a respective slider end stop without the fusion or joinder of any additional material; and

(b) applying sufficient heat and pressure onto a third area of said zipper tape to cause material of said interlocked first and second zipper parts to deform and fuse in said third area, at least part of said third area being located between said first and second areas in said gap.

Claim 5 (Original): The method as recited in claim 4, further comprising the step of joining said zipper tape to opposing walls of packaging film material prior to said step (a).

Claim 6 (Original): The method as recited in claim 4, further comprising the step of mounting a slider to a portion of said zipper tape.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The method as recited in claim 5, further comprising the step of: (c) applying sufficient heat and pressure onto a fourth area to form a seal that extends generally transverse to a lengthwise direction of

said zipper tape, wherein said fourth area encompasses overlapping portions of said opposing walls of packaging film, said third and fourth areas are contiguous, and steps (b) and (c) are performed concurrently in one operation.

Claim 8 (Original): The method as recited in claim 4, wherein rails of said interlocked zipper parts overlap said third area but not said first and second areas, said rails being deformed in said third area.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The method as recited in claim 7, further comprising the step of cutting said zipper tape and said packaging film material along a line that passes through said third and fourth areas, but not said first and second areas.

Claim 10 (Original): The method as recited in claim 9, wherein said cutting line substantially bisects said third and fourth areas.

Claims 11-18 (Canceled).

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): A method of manufacturing reclosable packages, each package having a slider-operated zipper with end portions that function as slider end stops, comprising the following steps:

advancing a web of packaging film material having a zipper tape joined thereto to a first station, said zipper tape comprising first and second zipper strips;

at said first station, ultrasonically deforming and fusing material of ~~stamping~~ said first and second zipper tape strips in first and second areas, said first and second areas being separated by a gap;

advancing said web by one package width in a lengthwise direction of said zipper tape so that said gap is in register with a second station; and

at said second station, conduction heat sealing in a third area that lies at least partly in said gap between said first and second areas and includes a contiguous strip that extends generally transverse to said lengthwise direction, material a portion of said first and second zipper strips tape within said third area being deformed and fused and portions of said packaging film material within said third area being joined to form a seal having a predetermined width as the result of said conduction heat sealing.

Claim 20 (Original): The method as recited in claim 19, further comprising the steps of:

advancing said web by one package width in said lengthwise direction so that said third area is in register with a cutting instrument at a third station; and

at said third station, cutting said zipper tape and said packaging film material along a straight line intersecting and dividing said third area to separate a package.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): The method as recited in claim 19, further comprising the step of joining said first and second zipper strips tape to respective opposing walls of said packaging film material prior to said first advancing step.

Claim 22 (Original): The method as recited in claim 19, further comprising the step of mounting a slider to a portion of said zipper tape.

Claim 23 (Currently Amended): The method as recited in claim 19, wherein said first zipper strip comprises a first rail and said second zipper strip comprises a second rails rail, said first and second rails being deformed during said conduction heat sealing step, but not during said ultrasonic stamping step.

Claims 24-27 (Canceled).

Claim 28 (Currently Amended): A method of manufacturing a continuous length of zipper material having a multiplicity of sliders mounted thereto, comprising the following steps:

(a) extruding first and second zipper parts having mutually interlockable closure profiles;

(b) interlocking said first and second zipper parts to each other;

(c) inserting respective sliders on said interlocked first and second zipper parts at regularly spaced package-length intervals therealong; and

(d) deforming and fusing material of said interlocked first and second zipper parts by application of ultrasonic wave energy at a multiplicity of regions spaced at intervals therealong to form respective slider end stops without the fusion or joinder of any additional material, each of said ~~deformed-region~~ slider end stops being separated from the next ~~deformed-region~~ slider end stop spaced in one direction therefrom by a first predetermined spacing and from the next ~~deformed-region~~ slider end stop spaced in another direction opposite to said one direction by a second predetermined spacing that is much greater than said first predetermined spacing,

wherein the centers of said first predetermined spacings are situated at regularly spaced package-length intervals along said zipper, and each slider is situated within a respective one of said second predetermined spacings.

Claim 29 (Currently Amended): A method of manufacturing reclosable packages, each package having a slider-operated zipper with end portions that function as slider end stops, comprising the following steps:

(a) inserting respective sliders on interlocked first and second zipper parts of a zipper tape at regularly spaced package-length intervals therealong;

(b) deforming and fusing material of said interlocked first and second zipper parts by application of ultrasonic wave energy at a multiplicity of regions spaced at intervals therealong to form respective slider end stops without the fusion or joinder of any additional material, each of said deformed region slider end stops being separated from the next ~~deformed region slider end stop~~ spaced in one direction therefrom by a first predetermined spacing and from the next ~~deformed region slider end stop~~ spaced in another direction opposite to said one direction by a second predetermined spacing that is much greater than said first predetermined spacing, wherein the centers of said first predetermined spacings are situated at regularly spaced package-length intervals along said zipper, and each slider is situated within a respective one of said second predetermined spacings;

(c) joining said zipper tape with mounted sliders and deformed areas to opposing walls of packaging film material; and

(d) applying sufficient heat and pressure onto a third area of said zipper tape to cause said interlocked zipper parts to deform and fuse in said third area, at least part of said third area being located between said first and second areas in said gap.

Claim 30 (Previously Presented): The method as recited in claim 29, further comprising the step of: (e) applying sufficient heat and pressure onto a fourth area to form a seal that extends generally transverse to a lengthwise direction of said zipper tape, wherein said fourth area encompasses overlapping portions of said opposing walls of packaging film, said third and fourth areas are contiguous, and steps (d) and (e) are performed concurrently in one operation.

Claim 31 (Previously Presented): The method as recited in claim 29, wherein rails of said interlocked zipper parts overlap said third area but not said first and second areas, said rails being deformed in said third area.

Claim 32 (Previously Presented): The method as recited in claim 30, further comprising the step of cutting said zipper tape and said packaging film material along a line that passes through said third and fourth areas, but not said first and second areas.

Claim 33 (Previously Presented): The method as recited in claim 32, wherein said cutting line substantially bisects said third and fourth areas.